

PUBLICATIONS REVIEW

Publications of the Dutch Malacological Society

The Dutch Malacological Society, or Nederlandse Malacologische Vereniging (NMV), has its broad objective in common with the Malacological Society of Australasia – to promote the study of molluscs. It was established in 1934, somewhat earlier than the MSA in 1955. NMV now has about 600 members, which, also in common with the MSA, includes members with a range of interests. Both societies cater for amateurs who collect shells, through fishers and farmers, to those involved in pure and applied scientific research. Both societies undertake activities that include field trips, lectures, conferences, workshops and scientific publication. It is in this last area of scientific publication where NMV is the envy of other malacological societies worldwide, for its range of quality publications addressed to the various segments of its membership. The publications are the scientific journal *Basteria*, the large-format colour publication *Vita Malacologica*, which is issued as a supplement to *Basteria*, and the newsletter *Spirula*.

Basteria

Basteria is the scientific journal of the NMV and commenced in 1936. It is published twice per year in English, with Volume 67 appearing in 2003. It is in A5 size, usually with line drawings and black and white photographs, but Volume 67 contains nine pages of colour illustrations.

Basteria covers a wide range of topics in malacology, including systematics (with check lists), ecology and geographical distribution of all the classes of molluscs, apparently with no limit of geography. As one would expect, European fauna is well represented, as with the paper 'A remarkably rich prosobranch fauna endemic to the French Pyrenees'. In geographical contrast, 'The terrestrial molluscs of Easter Island' deals with a part of the world once remote from Holland, but now only a plane trip away, with the disappointing result that the fauna consists mainly of introduced taxa. Ecological work includes 'Herring gulls learn to feed on a recent invader in the Dutch Wadden Sea, the Pacific oyster', and systematic work includes papers such as 'Studies on the Streptaxidae of Malawi' and 'Four new Diplommatinidae from southern Thailand'.

Although *Basteria* generally does not include many papers on genetics, anatomy and phylogeny, papers are generally accompanied by quality line drawings, and the reproduction of photographs is excellent. Colour plates are sometimes included. However, a recent nudibranch paper includes excellent diagrams of morphology and anatomy, but unfortunately the photos of the living animal are in black and white in contrast to the spectacular colour plates in a monograph on North Atlantic Pectinoidea.

Vita Malacologica

Vita Malacologica is published once per year as a supplement to *Basteria*. Only the first issue, December 2002, has appeared so far, so time will tell whether this approach is successful. As explained in the introduction to the first issue, *Vita Malacologica* has taken over some of the role of *Vita Marina*, publication of which ceased for financial reasons, but is not simply a continuation of that journal under a new name. The casual observer would think otherwise, as *Vita Malacologica* apparently rolls off the same printing press and is

implemented by the same designers responsible for *Vita Marina*; the page format, printing style and contemporary cover design remain the same, as do the quality paper, the clear and spacious layout and the high-quality colour illustrations.

Vita Malacologica is a journal for the publication of original papers, with the advantage of A4 format and full-colour illustrations. The stated intention is to concentrate on a theme for each issue; themes may be systematic, geographical, methodological, etc. The theme of the first issue is the family Strombidae, although this is not clearly identified anywhere – the reader discovers it by reading the paper titles in the tables of contents. The intention is apparently not to provide a review of the theme, but to simply group together what appear to be *ad hoc* contributions in the area. Hence the issue at hand contains papers on the Stromboidea of north-west Borneo, the distribution of species of *Tibia* in Yemen, and one introducing two new Indo-West Pacific strombid genera.

Publishing a supplement to a scientific journal with a different format and content and giving it a separate title is an unusual approach. However, in the realm of making specialist scientific publications viable, everything (as in love and war) is allowable. With the ever-increasing number of scientific journals and newsletters competing for a fixed pool of readers, and ever decreasing budgets of libraries and museums, any new approach to publishing is worth a try.

Spirula

Spirula is the newsletter of the Society, appearing six times per year. It contains the usual items for a malacological newsletter – club news, short articles, observations and field trip reports – but, in addition, has regular sections that are a service to the international malacological community, both amateur and technical.

The observation articles in *Spirula* are themselves substantial contributions, such as items on the invasion of muricids into French oyster beds and the appearance of an Indo-West Pacific keyhole limpet in the Mediterranean. These items are in Dutch, but an abstract is given in English.

Each issue of *Spirula* contains a taxonomically arranged list of newly described shelled mollusc species-group taxa (apparently) worldwide. The list includes the name, geographic locality and the literature reference. Accompanying this is a summary of general taxonomic publications, also arranged by family. Both provide very useful resources to keep up to date with current developments.

Of more general interest, the newsletter contains sections on new books, covering a range from very technical to general interest, and a regular section of molluscs on stamps. The coverage of NMV publications is indeed comprehensive!

Further information about the Dutch Malacological Society can be found at www.spirula.nl.

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